

July 28, 2011



Blackford County
Economic Development

Federal Communications Commission
c/o Marlene Dortch, Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

***WT 11-65: In the Matter of applications of AT&T Inc.
and Deutsche Telekom AG for consent to assign or
Transfer Control of licenses and Authorizations***

Dear Chairman Genachowski and FCC Commissioners,

Blackford County, Indiana is a very rural part of the country that is habitually neglected by technological advancements and telecommunications upgrades. The potential merger between AT&T and T-Mobile USA, which is currently before the FCC in Docket No. 11-65, would provide a welcome break from that cycle of mistreatment by upgrading AT&T's 4G LTE technology and expanding wireless broadband coverage to over ninety-seven percent of the country. As the Executive Director of the Blackford County Economic Development Corporation, I ask that these rural upgrades remain paramount in your discussions regarding the merger.

As a condition of the merger, AT&T has pledged to invest an additional \$8 billion in infrastructure improvements and network expansions. This type of private investment would drive economic development and ultimately lead to increases in overall employment throughout the county. This economic boost can be attributed to the additional manpower that AT&T will require in order to build out their network and subsequently provide future maintenance and management. Existing businesses in the area could then grow and become more efficient once they are connected to AT&T's improved wireless network. The potential for business development and increased economic vitality are impressive and cannot be overemphasized.

In addition to economic improvements, this merger would benefit many other sectors of society throughout Blackford County. For example, rural telemedicine applications can be improved and built upon if this merger is allowed to proceed. By increasing the scope of wireless broadband, more of our sick neighbors or elderly citizens could use telemedicine to instantly connect to doctors or hospitals. This type of innovation in the healthcare field could provide increased comfort while reducing cost and maintaining a high quality of care. Additional improvements could be extended to education and business practices. Via the use of teleconferencing and remotely utilizing online education resources, our communities can save money and communicate more efficiently from nearly anywhere in the county, regardless of how rural the location is today.



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Clearly there are many significant improvements that could be extended throughout Blackford County once this merger is approved. By permitting this transaction to proceed, the FCC would be making way for a flood of societal and economic improvements to improve the quality of life in our rural county. I ask that these issues weigh heavily on your decision to approve this merger.

Feel free to contact me anytime at (765) 348-4944 or by email at rcleveland@blackfordcoedc.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rob Cleveland
Executive Director
Blackford County Economic Development

CC:

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell